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# Censorship Accords Signed By Thousands, Study Shows

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WASHINGTON, June 13 — More than 120,000 employees now working for the Federal Government have agreed in writing that for the rest of their lives they will submit for censorship any speech, article or book they produce that concerns the sources and methods of intelligence gathering.

The disclosure that tens of thousands of civilian and military employees have signed required censorship agreements came four months after strong objections in Congress prompted President Reagan to withdraw a proposal for a somewhat broader censorship requirement.

All employees with access to certain intelligence secrets have been required to sign censorship agreements since early 1981 under what was then a new interpretation of an existing Presidential executive order. Those required to sign include most top policy-makers as well as a number of clerks, secretaries and technicians.

## 43 Agencies Respond to Survey

The number of individuals who have signed the censorship agreement was made public today in a report prepared by the General Accounting Office, an investigative arm of Congress. The report, based on replies provided by 43 separate agencies, was prepared at the request of the chairmen of the House Government Operations Committee and the House Postal Office and Civil Service Committee.

Because of the special requirements of their work, the survey did not include the Central Intelligence Agency or the National Security Agency. Among other agencies that did not respond to the survey as of Dec. 31 were the Justice Department, the Department of Energy, the Office of Management and Budget and five other agencies.

Representative Jack Brooks, Democrat of Texas, chairman of the Government Operations Committee, said in a statement that he was "shocked and

dismayed at the findings."

Senator Charles McC. Mathias Jr., Republican of Maryland, a leader in the Senate group opposed to prepublication review, said the "G.A.O. report makes it clear that the issue of lifetime censorship agreements is not dead."

## 'Program Not Needed'

Mr. Mathias added, "The executive branch without any significant degree of consultation with Congress has put in place a program of censorship that is, on the basis of what we know now, demonstrably not needed."

According to testimony before the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee, the prepublication review requirement was first imposed by the Reagan Administration in early 1981. Until then, officials given access to a special category of classified information had been asked to sign an agreement saying only that they would not disclose it.

In the proposal withdrawn by the Reagan Administration on Feb. 14, lifetime censorship would have been imposed on any official who was about to write or talk about "any information concerning intelligence activities, sources or methods."

The requirement that had been in place since 1981 has slightly different language. The existing requirement imposes lifetime censorship on any material concerning "intelligence sources or methods" of intelligence gathering. It does not include the phrase, "any information concerning intelligence activities."

## Total Incomplete

The accounting office said another reason the total number of people who had signed such an agreement was incomplete was that it did not include those officials who had signed agreements but then retired or gone to other jobs.

The accounting office also said that the responding agencies had reported a total of 43 instances in 1983 when classified information was disclosed. The



Associated Press

Senator Charles McC. Mathias Jr., a leader in the group opposed to Government censorship of materials written by Federal employees.

agencies said 34 of these instances were not submitted to the Justice Department for investigation.

The accounting office report said there had been a sharp increase in the number of articles and books being reviewed by the Reagan Administration in the past year or so. It said that the Defense Department reviewed 2,784 articles and books in 1981, 6,457 in 1982 and 10,088 in 1983.

At the time Mr. Reagan withdrew the new censorship proposal in February, and left the existing requirement in place, several Administration officials said the suspension was aimed at eliminating a potential political problem caused by widespread criticism of the far reaching order.

One official said the White House hoped "to remove it as a sore spot, a source of controversy" in an election year.

Mr. Brooks has introduced legislation that would prohibit the Government from imposing any prepublication review requirement and rescind any such requirements then in effect except for employees of the C.I.A. and the N.S.A.

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